evidently contemplating such an erection as is proposed to be made on the flat of the house in question. The Act even contemplates the setting up of, on the flat or roof of a building, a turret, dormer, or other erection, formed of combustible materials (schedule D, part 3), because it provides that if in that case the erection be within five feet of a party-wall, then such party-wall must be carried up, and 'extend one foot six inches higher, and one foot six inches wider than any such erection.'

In conclusion, I beg leave to observe, that Mr. Pennethorne having formally surveyed the premises on the part of the Office of Woods and Forests, has given permission for the inclosure in question to be erected, and, further, I deem it necessary to state that I do not make this requisition because I have the slightest doubt of my right to proceed, but solely to prevent delay, which might be caused by ulterior steps on the part of the district surveyor, and would be greatly injurious to the the owner. I do not desire to be heard on the same. Begging an early decision,—I have the honour to subscribe myself, gentlemen, your very obedient servant. GEO. GODWIN."

In this the district surveyor concurred. On the 15th, a letter was received from the registrar, stating, "that the present impression of the official referees is, that the erection shewn in the drawing would be contrary to the Metropolitan Buildings Act, unless the chimneys and party-wall within 5 feet therefrom be raised; but that, before making their award therein, they wish to give the parties an opportunity to be heard, if they should desire it."

At the hearing, which accordingly took place, the district surveyor "stated the grounds on which he considered the erection in question to be a room or story, and not a mere erection on a roof, to be,—that there was to be a floor therein above the ceiling of the present attic story, and that the erection was of a more important character than a dormer or turret, or such like erection, referred to in schedule G of the Metropolitan Buildings Act; and the said George Godwin contended, that as door-frames and window-frames were mentioned in the said schedule G in connection with erections on roofs or flats, it went to prove that the Metropolitan Buildings Act contemplated erections as important as the one in question being set up on a roof or flat of a building; and that, as it appeared to be there and then generally admitted that the erection in question was not a room forming part of a second story in the roof, it must of consequence be held to be an erection on the roof; and that such erection, being to be built of fire-proof materials, the said Act did not touch it, and that they were not required by schedule D, part 3, or any other rule of the said Act, to raise the party-wall against a fire-proof erection on a roof, especially if such erection be fixed clear and independently of such party-wall."

On the 25th of March, two of the Referees agreed in an award (the third dissenting from it), to the effect that it would be contrary to the act to set up the inclosure as shewn by the drawing, but that it would *not* be contrary to set it up if turned lengthwise and placed midway between the walls, so that no injury be done to the adjoining owner on either side in forming such inclosure. By which arrangement it would stand about 4 feet from each wall. Costs of office, 2*l.* 4*s.* 8*d.* and 1*l.* 1*s.* to the district surveyor, to be paid by the requisitionist.

To this decision, Mr. Symonds, the registrar, agreeing with the requisitionist, that the Referees had no power to prevent the erection from being set up as described in the drawing, refused to attach the seal, and referred the question to the "Woods and Forests," with his reasons for refusing.

The Woods and Forests it seems have not yet determined the question, and in the meantime the erection has been put up in accordance with the views of the two Referees.

THE LATE MR. HOLTZAPFFEL.—The death of this gentleman, whose valuable work on "Turning and Mechanical Manipulation," we recently mentioned, must be esteemed a real loss. He was distinguished by great inventive ingenuity and scientific acquirements.

ON THE SCENERY AND STAGE DECORATIONS OF THEATRES.

AT a meeting of the Decorative Art Society, April 14th,* a paper "On the Scenery and stage Decorations of Theatres" was read by Mr. John Dwyer. He observed, that in resuming his observations on theatres,† he felt supported by the public interest excited by his former papers, and more especially by the consideration which the laws of acoustics had received from other societies, who had, in a great measure, sustained the views he then introduced, without, however, throwing much additional light on that important subject; nevertheless, he believed that from this fact alone some public benefit might reasonably be hoped for. The opinions he had expressed upon construction and form had, in the Théatre Historique,‡ recently opened in Paris, been in many respects exemplified, which he attributed to the fact of persons of practical experience and acquaintance with the circumstances and requirements of theatres having been consulted. The criticisms upon this theatre state, as a striking result, that every person obtaining a seat is enabled to see the whole of the stage. With reference to the proscenium, he had become more forcibly impressed with the advantages arising from the form he had then suggested; and he stated, that Mr. Frederick Chatterton had since informed him, that his instrument (the harp) was more favourably heard in Covent Garden than in any other of the metropolitan theatres. In an ornamental and artistic view, the form he proposed combined some very essential properties. The proscenium should, he considered, form a frame to the animated picture on the stage; and the broad equal surface offered through his suggestion, afforded an example and suitable field on which to display rich and fanciful embellishments. The Surrey Theatre has an example of this frame-like character, and, together with the drop-scene, exhibits, thus far, a satisfactory effect; and also in the Théatre Historique this has been attended to with success. The usual arrangements within the proscenium, of crimson draperies, frequently exhibit most marvellous compositions, but of that common-place nature which he would gladly assist in exterminating. A drop-scene, he said, certainly required consummate skill. The pause in the excitement from the stage effects leads to the contemplation of the house in its *tout ensemble*, thus demanding a twofold consideration,—a subject of appropriate and interesting character, together with a proper regard to the general interior of the theatre.

The reader then noticed several devices which have been applied for drop scenes; such as the looking-glass curtain at the Coburg some years ago, which he termed a costly absurdity, although at that time thought a great hit; but a drop scene painted by Stanfield for the opera of Acis and Galatea, produced at Drury Lane some years ago, he considered to be a fine work. It displayed in vignettes ideal scenes by the artist from the opera, and thus offered to the mind's eye congenial art during the pauses between the acts; nevertheless these pictures were placed within elaborate frames, contrasting strongly with the decorative expression of the theatre. A drop scene painted by P. Phillips for Astley's, was mentioned as a proper application of art to this purpose; it was intended to harmonize with the general *business* of the theatre, and was an excellent illustration of it. The subject being "Victoria's return from Olympian Games with a procession to the Sacrifice," the groups thus brought together had direct relation to the features in the performances on the stage. Mr. Dwyer considered that the composition always ought to have relation to the action on the stage, and observed, that this principle has been regarded in some degree, in the present drop scene at Her Majesty's Theatre, where the design embodies abstract ideas of opera and ballet, but in connection with a massive architectural representation quite distinct from the general character of the interior, of which it occupies so large a portion. He contended that more unity in this particular ought to be attempted, and stated that he would treat the drop scene as a picture, to which the proscenium should be an outer frame-work, but he would have an inner frame appearing on the scene itself and partaking of the style of ornament adopted in other parts of the theatre; as approximating illustrations of his meaning, he mentioned those of the Princess's and the Adelphi, both of which however, are defective in some minor qualities. This manner has also the advantage of *contrasting with stage scenery*. Mr. Dwyer next directed attention to light; and he observed, that the reflectors to the footlights in our theatres present an objectionable appearance, and he shewed a sketch of ornamental screen-work for concealing them, he also suggested that they admit of a very different arrangement on the bude principle with modifying reflectors, and that it would be advantageous to carry off the noxious result of combustion. He advocated the use of stronger side-lights, having their intensity regulated in accordance with the shadowing on the scenery; and he mentioned with approval, the effects thus occasionally produced in moonlight scenes.

He then referred to the records of the English drama, and alluded to those eminent men who have been employed to express "a righte merrie play most properlie;" to Master Inigo Jones's having, as it is stated, "fashioned and contrived in a most artful manner, the scenes required;" to Hogarth and Wattson, who assisted with their talents in elevating the stage; and to Philip de Loutherbourg, who, under the tutelage of Garrick, introduced changes, and so far developed the magic power of stage effect, as to earn for himself the designation of the prince of scene-painters. It was singular, he observed, to reflect upon the fact, that notwithstanding the exalted dignity imparted by the efforts of superior painters, the importance of scenery is insufficiently recognized by managers, the artist to a theatre being frequently required to be a more useful personage than a "filler up of backgrounds;" he must also be an actor, although as the painter of talent he would awake more pleasurable emotions in the audience than probably all the other performances taken together. Newspaper criticisms have rarely noticed his merits or mentioned his name, although his difficulties are of no common order when giving to the dreamy fancies of an author a "local habitation,"—such as the Caverns of Despair, a Palace in Fairyland, the Hall of Desolation, Gardens of Pleasure, the Abode of Darkness, or the Bower of Happiness, to which are sometimes added inventive and imitative qualifications, embracing the whole range of animate creation, and frequently required to illustrate Butterflies' Ball-room, and similar extravaganzas.

Mr. Dwyer then explained the management of colours for artificial light,—the exaggeration necessary to scenery, the vigorous lights and shadows, broad and dashing touches, which enter into the scene-painter's art. A slight knowledge of the stage, he observed, would be sufficient to prove that at the present time, with one or two exceptions, the imitation of outward things is very imperfect—they are but half-represented. The banqueting-hall is resplendent with gold and silver and gorgeous magnificence everywhere *but on the floor*, or, a forest, luxuriant with foliage and intricate with beauties in form and colour, is robbed of half its fair proportion of effect by the poverty on which it stands. Mr. Dwyer stated that success had usually attended the careful "getting up" of plays, and that taste applied to the merest trifles had generally been appreciated by the public.

A description was then given of the management of "wings, flats, and fly-boards," and the ludicrous *contretemps* of the scene-shifters, in their working dresses, appearing on the stage to remove refractory scenes, together with other casualties incidental to change of scenery during the act, were adduced as sufficient reasons for advocating a less frequent resort to that practice.

Mr. Dwyer here concluded this portion of his paper, but a second portion was announced,

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* February 24th and March 16th. Papers "On the Chemical Properties of Timber Trees" were read by Mr. Vickery, March 23rd. "A discussion upon the influence of light and colours" took place. With reference to the power which colours possess of absorbing and imparting heat, several practical remarks were offered; among others, the lime washing of pipes, which conveys heat within non-conductories, was condemned. The theory of three primary colours was questioned; it being assumed, that yellow, red, and blue are indeterminate gradations of intensity between light and its absence. In support of this argument, the red appearance of the sun, when viewed through a fog, and the varying changes of colour according to the medium seen through, with other results of a like nature, were adduced. The phenomenon of the object which is placed within the range of two lights, proceeding from the moon and a street gas-lamp, producing thereby two shadows of different colours, red and blue, was mentioned as worthy of consideration.

† See page 384, ante.

‡ Called in our description of it some time ago, *Theatre Montpensier*.

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